

REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed January 11, 2006. At the time of the Office Action, Claims 1-3, 6, 8-10, 12, 13, and 25-27 were pending in this Application. Claims 1-3, 6, 8-10, 12, 13, and 25-27 were rejected.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-3, 6, 12, 13, 26 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 3,616,273 issued to Itsumi Jack Oita (“Oita”) in view of U.S. Patent 2,166,611 issued to J.H. Schapleigh (“Schapleigh”).

Claims 8-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Oita in view of Schapleigh and in further view of U.S. Patent 4,390,785 issued to Mark E. Faulhaber et al. (“Faulhaber”).

Claim 25 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Oita in view of Schapleigh and in further view of U.S. Patent 5,711,147 issued to George E. Vogtlin et al. (“Vogtlin”).

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the method is performed by subjecting the gas to a nonthermal plasma discharge, and to incorporate the limitations of Claim 25. Claim 1 has been further amended to recite that the energy for dissociation is sufficient to dissociate nitrogen but insufficient to dissociate methyl. This feature of the invention is supported on page 10, lines 4 - 10.

The references cited by the Examiner do not teach or suggest the invention of amended Claim 1. Because Claim 1 now incorporates Claim 25, the Examiner relies on a combination of three references: Oita, Schapleigh, and Vogtlin. As acknowledged by the Examiner, Oita does not teach a method for ammonia production by nonthermal plasma discharge. Vogtlin teaches the use of ammonia as a reducing agent, not as a product of dissociation and reformation of a natural gas.

Furthermore none of the references teach or suggest controlling the dissociation energy such that nitrogen is dissociated and methyl is not.

Request for Continued Examination

Applicants enclose a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) transmittal and a check in the amount of \$395.00 for the RCE fee.

CONCLUSION

Applicants have now made an earnest effort to place this case in condition for allowance in light of the amendments and remarks set forth above. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of all pending claims.

Applicants enclose a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) and a check in the amount of \$395.00 for the RCE fee. Applicants also enclose a Petition for Two Month Extension of Time and a check in the amount of \$225.00 for the extension fee. Applicants believe there are no additional fees due at this time, however, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees necessary or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-2148 of Baker Botts L.L.P.

If there are any matters concerning this Application that may be cleared up in a telephone conversation, please contact Applicants' attorney at 512.322.2634.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date: June 8, 2006

SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO:

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